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ABSTRACT

Intended especially for elementary and secondary school teachers, this report analyzes the results of the Keystone Writing and Reasoning Skills Workshop. The introductory summary states the purposes of the project, which were to interest elementary and secondary school teachers in the proposition that writing is essential to critical thought and, from this involvement and commitment, to improve the writing skills and attitudes toward writing of the participants. The first section explains the importance of writing, pointing out that the ability to write is central to the development of thought. The next section describes the spring workshops, the purposes of which were to introduce current theory and techniques in composition and to refine the writing and composing skills of Fort Worth teachers. The next section, "Evaluating the Writing Samples," contains procedures for evaluation and includes sample training papers and a selected, 11-item bibliography on holistic scoring. In the following section, three instruments tested the participants' assessment of the workshops: a measure of writing apprehension scale, a scale for negative attitude toward writers and writing, and a post-assessment of the workshop. Sample learning logs--entries written by participants after each session--are presented in the next session. The final section discusses the use of current research and methodology in the teaching and the act of writing, the strategy of using workshops, and the use of holistic evaluation. (EL)

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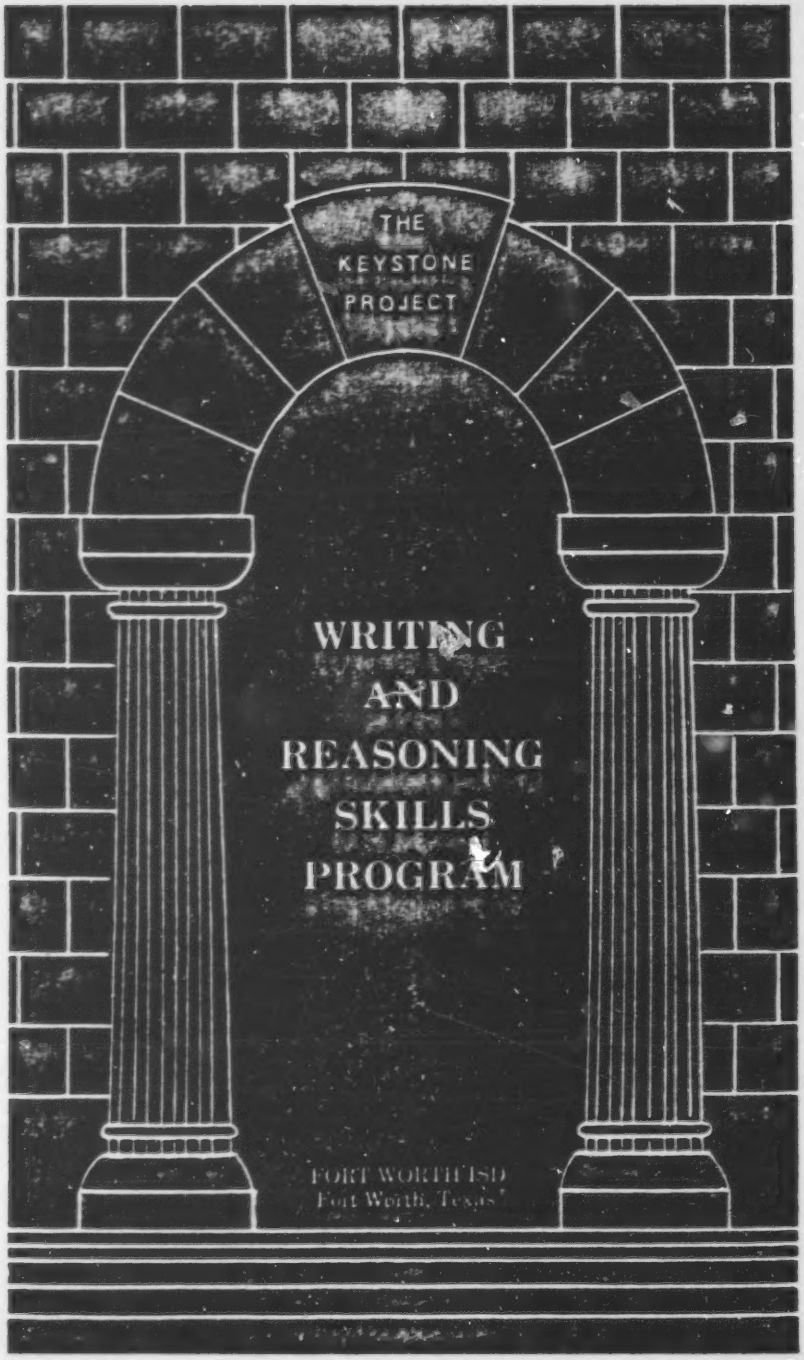

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KEYSTONE WRITING AND REASONING SKILLS WORKSHOPS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The teaching of writing has gained tremendous importance during the past twenty years. Educators have begun to realize that the act of writing involves much more than the mere aspects of verification that we associate with correct usage. Rather, the act of writing is, at once, the recording of cognitive thought and the structure by which we are able to think. Critical thinking, argumentative strategies, logic, analysis, rational thought itself--all are possible only through the process of writing. Equally significant, writing helps us integrate the myriad experience of life by allowing us to speculate imaginatively so that we might hold the mirror of our own minds, our recorded thoughts, up to ourselves.

In the Keystone Writing and Reasoning Skills Workshops, a project funded through the Richardson Foundation and coordinated through Ms. Sally Hampton, we were aware that our purpose was to interest elementary and secondary school teachers in the engaging proposition of writing as essential to critical thought and, from this involvement and commitment, to improve our participants' writing skills and their attitudes toward writing.

To aid us in our program, we brought in specialists in writing research from across the country. Naturally, we chose this strategy because the adage is true that one cannot be a prophet in one's own land. More importantly, we realized that much of the research in the teaching of writing is quite recent, and, at present, being conducted by a relatively small number of

scholars. It was our aim to disseminate the findings of these educators to our teachers so that, eventually, they too could become as informed as possible and thus bring the findings of these researchers to practical use in the classroom.

In the following report, we have analyzed the results of our program by explaining the importance of writing, by describing the workshops, and by evaluating the writing samples, attitudes, and learning logs of the participants. We believe that we were able to heighten the perceptions about writing of our teachers. From this increased involvement, both these teachers and their students will benefit.

April, 1985
Ms. Sally Hampton
Dr. Charles Mazer
Dr. Norbert Elliot

INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

Over the past two decades, American education has seen a sharp rise in interest regarding the teaching of writing. Upon close examination, many of the assumed notions about writing--that all college educated people are skilled at writing, that writing is stressed equally across the disciplines--have been called into question. As a result, new emphasis has been given upon the teaching of writing, and the sheer number of fresh observations about the act of writing have been striking.

Traditionally, the teaching of writing has stressed correctness, a tradition that historically dates back to eighteenth-century writing instruction as indicated in such texts as George Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric (1776) and Hugh Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (1783). Such prescriptive grammars have, until very recently, dominated teaching and the public's general attitude toward language. However, in the 1970s students were admitted to college whose backgrounds did not include an adherence to standard written English. Efforts to serve these non-traditional students prompted new inquiries into the teaching of writing, and we began to understand that the act of writing was closely linked to complex, subtle cognitive processes. Although we cannot say that views holding that writing is nothing more than mere prescriptive grammar have been abandoned, we can say that more enlightened views of the writing process are becoming very influential in the teaching of writing at all levels.

In recent years, one of the most important developments has been that writing provides access to critical thought. Indeed, in his splendid study, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (1982), Walter Ong proposes that writing is not merely the recording of random thoughts but that, in reality, writing restructures consciousness. Ong cites at great length the differences between oral cultures and literate cultures and finds that the very thought patterns themselves of those in literate societies are far different from those living in primarily oral cultures. Indeed, the type of linear, embedded rational, orderly thought that we associate with modern consciousness is, Ong proposes, a direct result of writing.

One point is very clear: the ability to write is central to the development of thought. Really, the view that proposes that the teaching of writing is merely a back to basics movement does not take the matter seriously enough. What is at stake in the act of writing is the ability to think discriminatingly and to act according to rational thought.

In our recent workshops, we tried to promote thought about the writing process in order to promote thought about the nature of logical, orderly thought in our schools. As we will show in our description of the workshops themselves, and in our analysis of the participants' writing, their attitudes and their learning logs, our program has prompted a discerning, critical view of language that will be of use to the participants both in their own writing and in their teaching of writing in the classroom.

THE SPRING WORKSHOPS

We designed the Keystone Spring Workshops to address first the theory of writing as process. Subsequent weeks focused on prewriting activities, organization and specificity, syntactic maturity, and revision and response. Teachers met from 8:30 to 3:30 for five consecutive Saturdays. They were divided into three groups, each group meeting with a different visiting consultant and monitored by a different coordinator. The visiting consultants were experts, most of whom were published writers. The coordinators -- Sally Hampton, Charles Mazer and Wayne Musgrove -- were all National Writing Project trainers who responded each week to the teacher/participants' logs and offered additional information and support.

The purpose of the spring workshop was to introduce current theory and techniques in composition and to refine the writing and composing skills of Ft. Worth teachers. Toward this end, teachers were required to write and revise a piece of discourse each week. They read their writing to editing groups who responded to the writing and offered suggestions and support. A collection of these writings was published for each group so that each teacher would have the sense of a finished product and a possible model for a classroom writing anthology.

KEYSTONE WRITING AND REASONING SKILLS WORKSHOPS SPRING 1985

SATURDAYS, FEBRUARY 2 - MARCH 2 8:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

Group I	Group II	Group III
Coordinator	Coordinator	Coordinator
Sally Hampton	Charles Mazer	Wayne Musgrove
Keystone Project	East Texas State University - Texarkana	East Texas Writing Project

Week 1: Saturday, February 2 Introduction to the Writing Process

Mary K. Healy	Charles Mazer
Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP)	ETSU-Texarkana

* Between the sessions expand a piece of writing from the first session for small writing groups that will meet from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Week 2: Saturday, February 9 Using Specifics and Details

Yete Bradley	Bob Cochran	Rebekah Caplan
BAWP	University of Arkansas	BAWP - Intro to W.P.

* Between the sessions expand another piece of writing for next week's writing program.

Week 3: Saturday, February 16 Improving Sentence Variety and Style

Bill Strong	Jim Gray	Glenn Irvin
Utah State	BAWP Executive Director	East Texas State University

* Between the sessions choose a piece of writing from the first three weeks and revise it for your writing group.

Week 4: Saturday, February 23 Editing and Revising

Dot Carmichael	Jan Wall	Pat McGrath
ETSU-Texarkana	BAWP	BAWP

* Between the sessions revise and polish the piece of writing to be included in the anthology.

Week 5: Saturday, March 2 Summary and Review of the Writing Process

Mary K. Healy	Keith Caldwell	Liz Simons
BAWP	BAWP	BAWP

* Weekly writing assignments

Rationale

The rationale underlying this procedure was that as the teachers themselves engaged in the prewriting, writing, revising cycle, they would intuit the principles underlying the writing process. Further, they would -- through their own experiences -- be able to translate these principles into workable teaching strategies which they would carry back to their classrooms. We believe that the best teacher of writing is a teacher who writes.

Because most of what we know about the writing process has been learned only in the past twenty years and because much of this knowledge is - unfortunately - familiar only to researchers and academics, many teachers know little about how to teach writing.

Descriptions of Sessions

Week one of the spring workshop gave teachers an overview of writing theory and then focused on how theory could be put into practice. Mary K. Healy and Charles Mazer conducted sessions which had teachers brainstorm ideas and then write personal remembrances from their schooldays. These writings were shared in small groups so the teachers could get a sense of group response and editing techniques. Sharing writing is for most people very difficult initially. Week one, then, introduced teachers to the writing process and took them through the process as they wrote and shared their writing with other teachers.

On the second Saturday, Yete Bradley, Bob Cochran, and Rebekah Caplan showed the teachers how to use specifics in developing a writing topic, how to make writing appropriate for specific audiences, and how to organize ideas so that the writing is more effective.

The third session dealt with improving sentence structure. Bill Strong, Jim Gray, and Glenn Irvin led teachers through exercises in sentence combining and the Christensen method of generative rhetoric. These two techniques enable a writer to produce sentences which are both richly embedded and very specific. Both methods, moreover, help the writer to generate ideas, thus insuring that the discourse is more fully developed.

During the fourth weekend teachers worked on refining their group edicing skills and learned specific methods of effective editing. Dot Carmichael, Jan Wall and Pat McGrath each brought student papers which had been developed over several drafts. Teachers could see the student texts improve through the series of drafts as students incorporated the suggestions of their peer editors.

The last session directed by Mary K. Healy, Keith Caldwell and Liz Simons was given over to the reading of the teachers' best writings and to a discussion of what ideas the teacher/participants had found most helpful. The visiting consultants led discussions about how various ideas could be applied to the classrooms at specific grade levels. The

teacher/participants had the opportunity to address specific questions to the consultants and to respond on their efforts to implement specific strategies. Most teachers had tried some of the techniques already and were pleased to exchange their ideas. This was the most verbal of all the sessions with the teacher/participants actually directing the content of the session through their questions and comments.

Sally Hampton conducted a make-up session on March 9 for any teachers who had missed a workshop and for teachers who felt they would benefit from more work on prewriting techniques. Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers was the basis for this session. In addition, several of the teacher/participants summarized the most effective methods of specific sessions. It was the teacher/participants' first opportunity to do presentations and the result was a very informed, very easy exchange of ideas and questions.

Building a Group of Trained Teachers

All of the sessions were low-keyed and non-threatening and addressed the teacher/participants' opportunities to work together and develop friendships. We feel this is an important part of this program so that the teachers can have a support group when they go back into their classrooms to try these new ideas. Thus, the camaraderie developed during the workshop is an important part of the program's design.

Demographics

The eighty-four participants formed a group of Ft. Worth Independent School District instructional and supervisory staff members with more than average coursework in traditional English. Many were language arts teachers who had completed many hours of required and elective courses in this area.

Rounded to the half-point, the following figures represent an analysis of information about the participants in the spring workshops:

Female	88.5%
Male	11.5%

White	68.5%
Black	22.0%
Hispanic	8.0%
Indian	1.5%

21 - 30 years old	7.5%
31 - 40 years old	40.5%
41 - 50 years old	28.0%
51 - 60 years old	24.0%

Elementary School Teachers	34.0%
Middle School Teachers	33.0%
Secondary School Teachers	27.0%
Other	6.0%

Over 15 years teaching experience	42.0%
11 - 15 years teaching experience	25.5%
6 - 10 years teaching experience	23.0%
2 - 5 years teaching experience	8.0%
1 year teaching experience	1.5%

9+ courses in English	49.5%
7 - 8 courses in English	9.0%
5 - 6 courses in English	15.5%
3 - 4 courses in English	23.0%
0 - 2 courses in English	4.0%

3.5 - 4.0 grade point average in English	35.0%
3.0 - 3.49 grade point average in English	37.0%
2.5 - 2.99 grade point average in English	21.5%
2.0 - 2.49 grade point average in English	6.5%

Although many of the participants had taken quite a few hours in English for general studies or for certificates in language arts, only a few had been enrolled in programs that emphasized writing as a process. When they discussed the workshop sessions in relation to their previous experiences in traditional writing classes, most said that they found the new concepts not only different but also more productive.

EVALUATING THE WRITING SAMPLES

Background

Historically, evaluation of writing has been problematical. In 1901, the College Entrance Examination Board, realizing that the entrance requirements of universities were often arbitrary, instituted its own examination. The questions for the examination were compiled mainly from lists of readings drawn up by the universities and then taught in preparatory high schools. However, the arbitrariness of this system was perhaps as great as the arbitrariness of the system that it sought to replace. As Thomas L. Hopkins showed in his 1921 study ("The Marking System of the College Entrance Examination Board," Harvard Monographs in Education, Series 1, No. 2), the score that a student received on his examination depended as much on what reader scored his paper as upon his knowledge or talent at writing.

The gas rationing of World War II put an end to this comprehensive examination, and the direct assessment of a writing sample was replaced by indirect, objective measurements designed from 1945-1960 by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Hence, there came to be drawn the traditional lines between direct and indirect assessment of writing ability. The table reproduced below, composed by Trudy Conlin, Senior Examiner at E.T.S., concisely summarizes the differences between essay (direct assessment) and multiple-choice (indirect assessment) evaluation procedures:

ESSAY AND MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS IN TESTS OF WRITING ABILITY

	Essay	Multiple-choice
Method of Measurement	Direct - candidate is asked to perform task to be measured.	Indirect - measurement relies on correlation between performance on test and performance on actual task.
Skills measured	Unlimited - candidate must actually compose, organize, marshal evidence, spell, punctuate, etc.	Limited - certain aspects of writing cannot be measured in this format (for example, ability to marshal evidence, ability to set proper tone).
	Total - all aspects of writing can be measured at same time. Permits use of complete essay.	Fractionated - writing skill must be separated into parts to be measured independently. Relies, for the most part, on aspects of writing that can be measured in the sentence.
Time required	Depends on kind of writing required, but not less than 20 minutes per question.	Depends on item types used; can require as little time as 30 seconds per item.
Sampling done	Limited by time - no more than 3 samples an hour, best to have even fewer. Candidate who misinterprets or does not understand question misses on major part of test.	As many as 100 items per hour. Candidate who misses one question is not in serious jeopardy.
Method of Scoring	Must be individually scored by trained readers.	Can be machine-scored.
Validity	By providing direct measure, increases face validity.	Correlation between scores on multiple-choice tests and scores on essays is high.
	By requiring actual task, extends what can be measured and therefore increases validity.	
	Because sampling is limited, validity of essay used alone is not so great as that of essay used with multiple-choice.	
Reliability of Scoring	Reliance on subjective judgment in scoring reduces reliability.	Has scoring reliability of other machine-scored tests.
Test reliability	Is limited by scoring reliability, by length of test.	Can be above 90; a one-hour test can be 100 items long.
Cost	Increased cost for scoring (housing, paying readers, etc.) and for special procedures (new answer sheet, new systems design, special return of answer sheets by center, etc.).	Cost of regular machine scoring.
Time for scoring	Readers can read 20-minute essays at rate of 38 per hour. A reading day is about 6 hours.	Time required for regular machine scoring.
Reaction of English faculty	Approval	Hostility and distrust: Many English teachers believe (1) that multiple-choice tests are so limited in what they measure that they reduce writing to the level of subject-verb agreement when writing is much more than that (2) that multiple-choice tests are no more than exercises in error hunting and (3) that the way to measure whether a person can write is to have that person write.
Influence on Curriculum	Thought to encourage the requirement of actual writing in the schools	Thought to encourage having students do exercises in detecting errors as the method of teaching writing rather than having them actually write compositions

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Gertrude C. Conlan

March 24, 1978

Many of the disadvantages of indirect assessment--(1) that it must rely on correlation to other measures, (2) that it can only measure limited skills, (3) that it is received with distrust by those who evaluate writing daily in the classroom--are well known.

The research that initially helped to make these distinctions so clear, Fred I. Godshalk, Frances Swinefore and William E. Coffman's The Measurement of Writing Ability (1966), had readers make global, or holistic, evaluations of papers rather than evaluate papers according to any analytic primary-trait system. The result was that the researchers found that readers could agree consistently on the scores for a given paper if an holistic response, an entire impression of a paper, was sought.

From 1966 until the present, the Educational Testing Service has been involved in constantly refining the procedures of holistic evaluation, and, in the universities, authors such as Charles Cooper and Lee Odell have publicized the methods of direct assessment through such works as Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging (1977). As programs of evaluation and certification across the country become more and more interested in evaluating writing, work with the holistic method flourishes.

The popularity of the method is due, in part, to the total involvement on the part of the readers. Routinely, those who do not daily teach writing shy away from its evaluation because they feel incompetent in the face of so many possible grammatical and mechanical concerns. Yet, since an holistic evaluation

acknowledges that the whole of a piece of writing is greater than the mere sum of its parts--those parts of analytic counting of error, those areas that English teachers are so often associated with--readers are always immensely pleased to find that they can reliably and validly assess the writing ability evinced on a given sample. This more comprehensive, more intelligent view of the writing process is then often used by readers back in their classrooms, regardless of the discipline, to promote writing across the curriculum. Ultimately, the sense of intellectual communalism that holistic assessment promotes has proven to be quite worthwhile to researchers.

Evaluation Procedures

When evaluating the teachers' writing for the project at hand, the decision to use an holistic, direct method of evaluation was clear. Since we at East Texas State University have been involved with evaluating writing in university-wide examinations since 1950, we felt very familiar with the concern over employing a reliable and valid measurement. Our recent work with holistic evaluation made us secure in the premise that we could accurately assess the teachers' samples.

To begin the process, Dr. Norbert Elliot, Dr. Tom Gandy, and Dr. Harry Muir instituted a process recently developed at E.T.S.U., a process of suspending a first response to a paper. The readers were instructed to list elements in writing, both negative and positive, that would lead them to score a paper

either lower or higher on a given scale. In other words readers were told to list their primary responses to a piece of writing and then to "bracket" these primary traits out of their first responses to a sample of writing.

Among the areas recorded by the readers were poor penmanship, lack of paragraphing, poor spelling, redundant sentence structure, lack of introduction or conclusion to the paper, and various grammatical blunders such as comma or semi-colon misuse. Thus, in agreeing to view the papers phenomenologically--the idea itself is taken from Edmund Husserl's philosophical work The Idea of Phenomenology (1907)--the readers were prepared to select papers evincing six levels of writing, with six as the highest level and one as the lowest.

The method of using a six point scale has been proven very successful for the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test, as well as for the Junior Level Essay at E.T.S.U. Indeed, we had no trouble in finding six levels of writing in the papers that we as readers could use to sharpen and focus our criteria for each level of ability. After randomly reading through the first 83 papers, hereafter called Group I, we selected seven sample training papers that would serve as benchmarks to us for the rest of the day's reading. The writers composed in response to the prompt given below:

A. Read the following and then write an appropriate essay.

Assume that your school district has established an awards program to recognize outstanding work by district personnel. The award may be given for excellence in teaching, coaching, or counseling. Also assume that a number of personnel are being considered for the award but only a few winners will be chosen.

Write a recommendation as to who should receive this award. You may write about any person you know reasonably well. This may be someone in your building or someone whose work you know through your children.

Assume that the final decision will be made by a panel of parents and teachers. Some members of the panel do not know the person about whom you are writing. Further, some members of the panel may be inclined to prefer someone other than the person you are recommending. However, panel members will at least listen to a good argument. Be sure to provide specific information about the person and about the reasoning and/or criteria that underlie your recommendation.

For purposes of this writing assignment you will need to decide whether this person is being considered for an award for teaching, coaching, or counseling.

Through the use of such papers, we were able to refer to our set standards throughout the reading to ensure that we were scoring consistently. If articulated, the standards for each level could be specified through these criteria:

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vel_6
ers well organized, often carefully reasoned
very good sense of unity
Frequent sentence variation
Good word choice that may be unusually striking, vivid, or creative
Virtually free of grammatical or mechanical errors
Level_5
Well organized
Good sense of unity
Frequent sentence variation
Good word choice, that may be vivid or striking
Few, if any grammatical or mechanical errors
Level_4
Paper is organized, although it may be weak in logic, example, or unity
Sense of unity, although transition may be lacking
Some sentence variation
Appropriate word choice for college level writing, although word choice may sometimes be elementary
Some errors in grammar and mechanics, but these errors do not necessarily distract the reader from the continuity of the paper
Level_3
Paper attempts to organize the topic, but fails due to such errors as faulty logic, lack of precise example, or superflous ideas
Little sense of unity
Some sentence variation
Repetitious or poor word choice
Errors in grammar and mechanics that distract the reader from the content and continuity of the paper
Level_2
Paper attempts to develop topic but fails due to such errors as faulty logic, lack of precise examples, or superflous ideas
Little or no sentence variation
Repetitious or poor word choice
Numerous errors in grammar and mechanics
Level_1
Lack of topic development
Lack of unity
Little or no sentence variation
Repetitious or poor word choice
Numerous errors in grammar and mechanics

After intensive reading and discussion, the test developers decided that the lowest acceptable level of writing was level four.

However, throughout the reading we decided to maintain a "pure" holistic method and employ mainly a system of matching the papers that we were reading to the sample training papers that we had selected. In other words, we decided to shy away from the primary-trait methods that can so often cause discrepant readings. (To ensure that our levels were readily identifiable and distinct to the project directors, Ms. Sally Hampton and Dr. Charles Mazer were called into the room and asked to score the

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papers on the six point scale. We were pleased that their selections from the sample training papers matched ours on each level.)

In addition, we decided that level four was the lowest acceptable level of writing for the group in question, a judgment reached on the basis of the papers themselves and the range of writing abilities they displayed. We also decided that a paper would have to receive a combined score of 7 in order to pass. We agreed that papers drawing scores of more than two points apart--a 6 and a 3, or a 5 and a 2, for example--would be considered as discrepant and then read by a third reader. Finally, we developed a system by which readers' scores were masked from other readers.

After two and a half hours spent in bracketing, pulling the sample training papers, and deciding on the basis of discrepancy, we had a total reading time of three hours in which 83 papers were scored on March 16. (We rested for fifteen minutes hourly and took an hour and a half lunch break, thus working an eight hour day.)

We were very pleased to find that there were no papers differing three points or more. In other words, the inter-reader reliability was 100%. In fact, there were only 10 papers with differences of two or more points, thus lending an impressive 88% inter-reader reliability to our scoring.

The next day, March 17, we repeated our process of bracketing, and we again proceeded to pull the sample training papers from the 85 papers of Group II. The prompt, as well as two of the

levels*, level 5 and level 2, are given below:

Prompt

Assume that your school has special programs both for gifted students and for students who have serious learning disabilities. (The children in this latter group are not retarded and do not have auditory or visual impairment.)

Assume also:

1. that one of your students is being seriously considered for one of the programs;

2. that enrollment in the program must be limited to only those students who have the greatest need for the program.

Write a recommendation in which you explain your reasons for saying that the student should be admitted to the gifted program or that the student either should or should not be admitted to the program for students with learning disabilities.

Assume that the people who read your recommendation:

1. do not know the student;

2. will need to be able to defend any action they take on the basis of your recommendation.

Thus you will need to provide specific information about the student and about the reasoning and/or criteria that underlie your recommendation.

You may write about a student from this year's class or from a previous year's class. For purposes of this writing assignment you will have to decide whether the student is being considered for a program for gifted students or a program for students with learning disabilities.

*Since handwriting has a very strong effect on the reader in this type of evaluation, and since the essence of the paper is very often altered during the proofreading of transcription into typing, we have decided to reproduce the papers themselves as they are written.

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I recommend Stephen [redacted] for the Gifted Student Program. Acknowledging that enrollment in the program must be limited to only those students who have the greatest need for the program, I have a firm conviction that Stephen qualifies. His intellectual talents, his boredom and frustration with the content and pace of regular classes, and his obvious instinctive realization that he "doesn't fit in" in regular classes all conspicuously illustrate his need for the Gifted Program.

Stephen possesses an extraordinary vocabulary, reasoning skills, and creative ability. He truly loves words and has a very unusual flair for self-expression, both orally and in written composition. All of his aptitude test scores have been far above the average. He has written beautiful, precocious poetry, and two plays that are striking in their beauty, sensitivity, and honesty of expression.

His boredom and frustration with the content and pace of regular

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classes is often painful for Stephen. Sometimes some of the other students are made uncomfortable also by the obvious discrepancy present in their ability as compared to Stephen's. Because Stephen is a very polite and considerate person, he does not engage in negative behaviors that might be indulged in in situations like this. But this makes his misplacement even more painful to observe.

Stephen instinctively feels that he "doesn't fit in" in this class. This has caused him a lot of unhappiness. A few of the students have sometimes taunted him somewhat because of his abilities. His sensitivity is sometimes a double-edged sword. He enjoys its benefits but sometimes suffers from the negative side of it. Being called "Professor" by some of his classmates sometimes has been very difficult for him.

For the reasons cited, I enthusiastically recommend Stephen for the Gifted Student Program. Frankly, I will miss having him in my regular class, but both his interest and that of the other students will be best served by this action. Test records and compositions of Stephen's are available to corroborate my recommendation.

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My name is Sam [redacted], seventh grade social studies teacher. Lynn Brown is a student of mine. I am recommending she be admitted to the special programs for gifted students for the following reasons.

In my classes I have certain standards each student must meet in order to achieve a certain grade. This is done in three areas: tests, book reports, participation.

My test are structured so the low student can show he has learned my basic objectives. This is done by answering the multiple choice, and fill in the blank correctly. If this is done he will receive at the most a ninety. The advanced student will have to answer the essay correctly in order to achieve the 100.

Book reports are required. Each student turns in one book report per unit. The slower learner will be graded on content more than grammar or structure. The advanced student will be graded equally on all three areas.

Most important is participation. Each student is expected to read, answer questions, and participate in discussions. When a student

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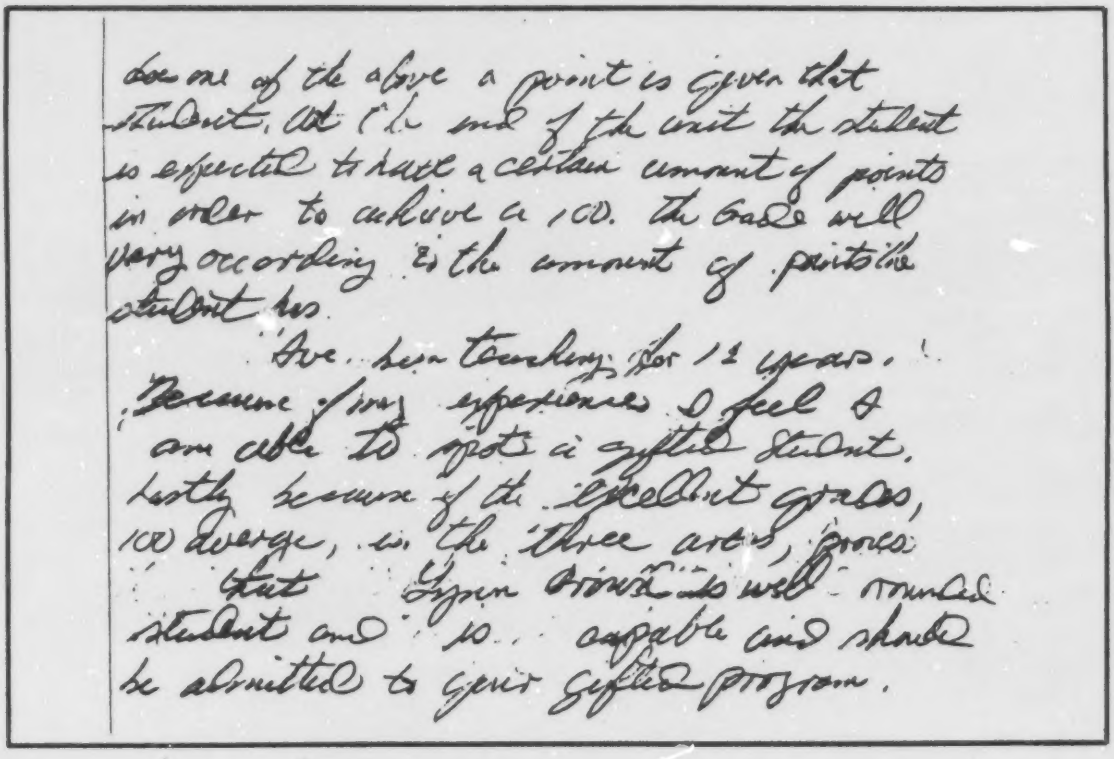
Because of the above a point is given that
student. At the end of the unit the student
is expected to have a certain amount of points
in order to achieve a 100. The grade will
vary according to the amount of points the
student has.
I've been teaching for 12 years.
Because of my experience I feel I
am able to spot a gifted student.
Lastly because of the excellent grades,
100 average, in the three areas, proves
that Lynn Brown is well rounded
student and is capable and should
be admitted to your Gifted program.

Again, to ensure that our levels of writing ability were clearly discernable in the seven sample training papers, we called into the room Ms. Hampton and Dr. Mazer to score these papers. Their scores were consistent with ours.

After reading the 85 papers of Group II, we <u>again found that we had a perfect inter-reader reliability on the three point discrepant scale and a 95.3 reliability on a two point discrepant scale. In other words, our reading of the papers over the two day period was quite valid in that there were no papers that required three readings.</u> Thus, the holistic method has proven successful in confirming our belief that readers could indeed evaluate writing consistently.

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Overall Analysis of the Samples

After the second day's eight hour session, Ms. Hampton and Dr. Mazer told the readers that we had not, in reality, been reading all pre-instruction papers on the first day and post-instruction papers on the second day. Rather, the two questions had been mixed for each examination period. As a result, the Group I papers that we had read had included 10 pretests and 73 post-tests, and Group II included 74 pretests and 11 post-tests. In analyzing the scores, we then found that 64 papers had achieved the cut score of 7; that is 76% of the pre-instruction papers had passed. On the other hand, 66 papers had scored 7 or above on the post-instruction evaluation and thus 78% of the students had passed the writing sample. Overall, then, there was a 2% increase in passing papers.

With such a high percentage of teachers initially passing the writing sample, it is difficult to imagine that a very dramatic rise in the percent of those passing could have been found. Even if one of the questions was more difficult than the other--indeed, we speculated that the first prompt may have been more difficult than the second because teachers within this district are certainly more familiar with evaluating students than they are with evaluating other teachers--it is still hard to imagine the substantial rise in skills that we are used to seeing in, say, basic skills students. For example, using our own holistic examination at E.T.S.U., Commerce, we found that only 34% of the students registered in our basic skills course at mid semester in the fall of 1984 were

able to achieve a cut score of 7 or above. Through instruction, by the end of the semester 78% were able to achieve a passing score, thus showing an improvement of 44%. On our more advanced evaluation, the Junior Level Essay, approximately 69% of the students were able to achieve a passing score, and even this relatively high rate of success is still 7% lower than the pre-test scores of the present study.

Therefore, it is important to remember that our study involved teachers in the field, professionals who set out to refine and enhance already existing skills, and it would have been unlikely that the overall improvement that we are used to seeing with other populations would have occurred here.

Analysis of Selected Papers

However, upon examination of individual participants, we were pleased to find a good deal of improvement. The following three pre-and post-instructional papers will serve to illustrate the nature of improvement.

The paper below is the pre-instruction writing sample of one of the participants:

Kirk [redacted] is a thirteen year old seventh grader with dancing, expressive eyes. He is small for his age; pleasant, and outgoing. Kirk is sensitive and easily wounded even though he maintains a rather carefree attitude during class.

Kirk can read a few words on sight and is able to sound out a few more. His knowledge of phonics is scattered, and his entire approach to reading is haphazard. In spelling he often misses even the initial consonant. The sentence structure in his speech is adequate. In his writing,

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structure is nonexistent. His strengths are his verbal fluency and general knowledge. He expresses himself well with a limited vocabulary.

In a testing situation, Kirk is a pleasure. Receiving an adult's undivided attention brings out the best qualities in his personality. He tries to please in every way he can. His scores do not reflect his obviously bright mind, showing up to four year deficits in reading and math.

Kirk is the best candidate for special help that I have ever encountered. His mind is waiting to be unlocked from a prison of undecipherable symbols. He is creative in art and in his play. In a more controlled atmosphere, he could function with less distraction and frustration. The depression that he feels over his lack of reading skill could possibly be lifted. I hope you will consider giving them this much deserved chance.

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This paper received a combined score of 8 (4 + 4) from the readers. Clearly, the paper is descriptive, perhaps overly so in that it lacks precise examples to substantiate the arguments. In reaching the conclusion ("Kirk is the best candidate for special help that I have ever encountered") the writer has actually not presented enough exact evidence in this brief paper for such a sweeping statement.

Here is the student's post-instruction paper:

Francile [redacted] is a marvelously wise, incredibly understanding person of high intelligence. She has a way of moving you into her warm circle of insight and persuading you to belong there. Her animated face and stimulating conversation draw you to her, creating an immediate bond. Her choice of careers, counseling and guidance, is a gift to those who work with her.

College, for Francile, began at sixteen, a result of skipping several grades. Her undergraduate work distinguished her as a fine student. Her graduate work proved her to be exceptional. A love for learning was kindled

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during those years, even though they were filled with the hardships of financial struggle.

Twenty years after graduation were spent teaching second graders who adored her and strived to make her proud of them. She responded with a level of instruction that guided their learning and supported each burgeoning personality. They grew up to be doctors, lawyers, sculptors, artists, and generally decent folk.

Francile's rapport with children did not end with her teaching career. She became a counselor in the true sense of the word. She, of course, shares occasional paper shuffling with the school staff, but the bulk of her time

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and energy is spent listening to children and guiding them. Her empathy for them is a thing of beauty, and her endurance is phenomenal.

Everyone in her community has called on her at one time or another. Every child knows of her friendly ear, her reticence to judge, her soothing voice. Any principle in her district can cite a dozen children that she's kept in school.

For Don, the developing teenage artist, she discovered an art scholarship. For Jim, behind in school and gradually giving up, she provided tutoring. Jerry had only a few ragged clothes for school, so Francile found willing philanthropists to buy clothes and supplies. Jill cost her mother to

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cancer and spent long hours in Francile's home, trying to piece together her own fragile hold on life. Examples of her good work could fill a library and all our hearts.

Still, if you asked her about these years she would recount only what they have given her. She would say that working with children has kept her young and vibrant and full of life. She would say that she has grown and learned and prospered with the children.

This unselfishness is her great strength and the principal reason for my nomination of Francile for the Counselor's Prize. The fact that she is my mother has no bearing except as a source of pride, enrichment, and continual comfort.

-30-

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Primarily, one first notices the fluency in this later paper, and, although we would be reticent to say that more words necessarily make a better paper, there is a sense of being more at home in the time constraints of the writing exercise in this second paper. The original sense of description remains with the writer, but there is also enough precise example given here to sustain the argument. Most importantly, there is a clear use of strategy here (narration) that is lacking in the first sample. The order of presentation of evidence in the paper is especially effective, especially in the final paragraph of page 3. The last sentence, the disclaimer, is quite interesting. On one hand, it is awkward, perhaps even comic, yet, conversely, it does display a sense of confidence in the ability to persuade the reader: had the paper not been effectively presented, and the writer not convinced that it was so, then the last sentence would have offset the entire piece. Overall, then, we have a sense here of a developing writer, a writer who is experimenting with learned technique and strategy. The paper received a combined score of 11, very close to the very top of the scale.

The work of the student below increased three points. The initial sample, reproduced below, drew a score of 9 (4 + 5):

John Doe is a child I envision would really benefit from the special gifted/talented program we have to offer. He has exceptional abilities in many areas and I believe he needs the challenges as only this program can offer. In my opinion, he meets the requirements in all areas with possibly the exception of conduct grades, and as I will explain later, I don't conceive this will be a problem.

Academically, John meets all the requirements for the program. He has ITBS and OCAT scores in the top percentiles. Most of his report card grades are in the nineties, though sometimes he scores lower because he is somewhat disorganized at times and doesn't always work up to his abilities. He does better when in a more structured and highly challenging environment. Even though I try to provide more demanding activities for him, this cannot always be done in the regular classroom to the extent he needs it. This is one reason I feel the gifted/talented class would benefit him and could better meet his needs.

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Interests and abilities are numerous in John. He is a talented musician, plays several instruments well, and even composes his own music. He excells in math and loves it. Many times he looks beyond and sees alternate and new ways of doing problems and sees relationships that others don't see. In fact it seems that he is always looking for patterns and relationships and frequently points these out to me. Although sometimes what he perceives is not correct, I always urge him to test his theories. Science is another subject of great interest to John. He reads widely and many times shares things he has learned with me. The gifted/talented program would provide an avenue for John to explore his ideas, develop his skills, and really sail beyond the ordinary.

John and his parents are all very interested in his being in the gifted/talented class. Even though he is highly motivated to qualify and has been trying to improve his citizenship, his overall grade has not been as good as we would like

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to see it. He has made S and N so far. I do not believe this would be a problem if John were admitted to the program. In fact, I this this is on reason why he should be accepted. I have found that John is a child that has a strong need for attention and acceptance. When he knows you like him and accept him, he does not feel the such a strong urge to show off. He is an excellent citizen in the academic classes when I have him. I let him share a lot of his ideas with me and truly enjoy him He is a different child now than he was the first week of school when he was making wise cracks and continually striving for attention. His continuing problems in conduct come in less structured classes such as art and music, and on the playground when he still feels the need to get attention from peers like Challenger of the gifted / talented class and a chance to excel in areas of his interests and use his abilities, in my opinion, are exactly what he needs. I don't believe there would be any problems in with his conduct.

(I didn't get to copy my last paragraph)

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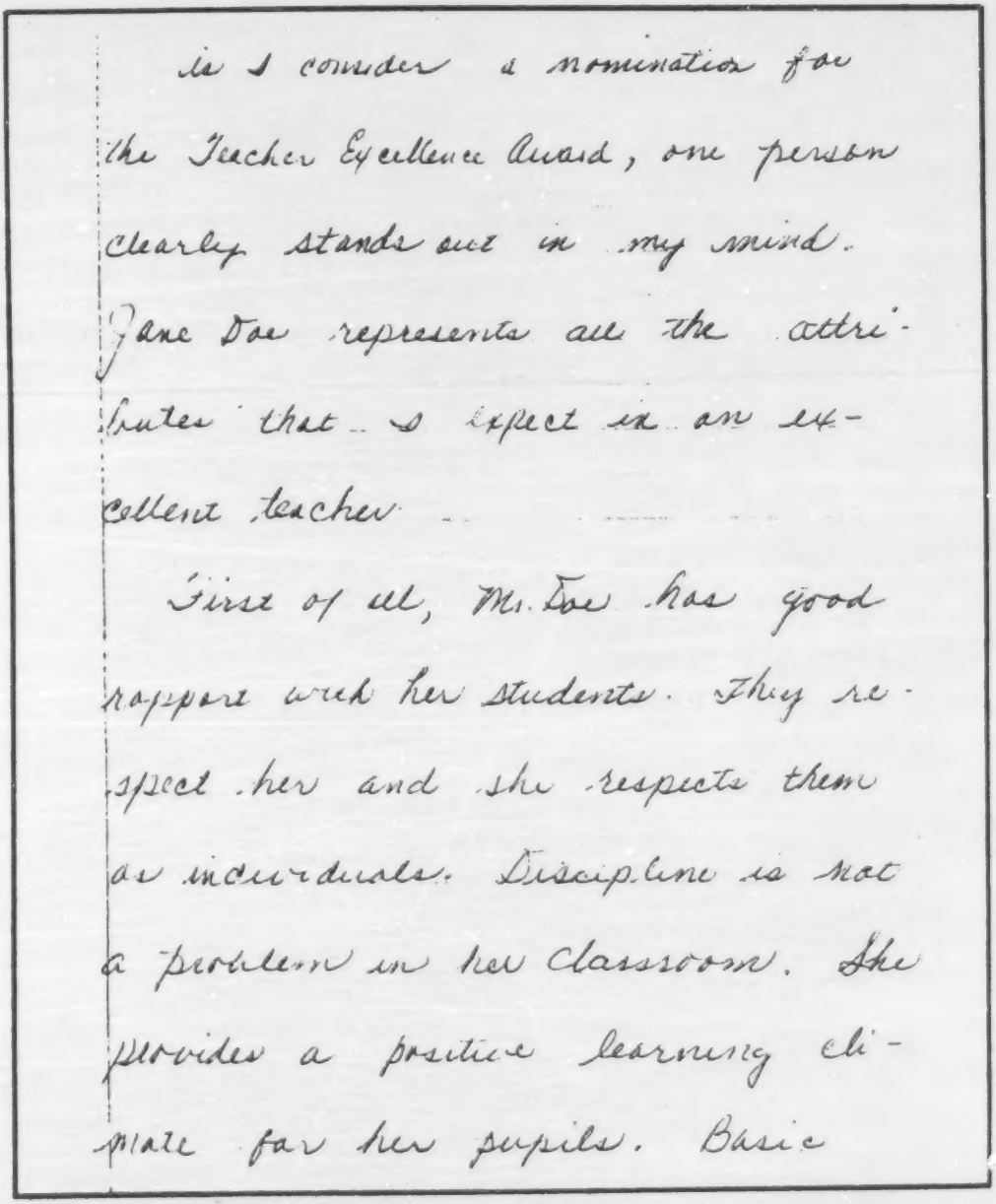
Although the paper begins well, by the end of page 2 the writer begins to drift. In fact, this final paragraph lacks a clear sense of focus: it begins with a discussion about the student's parents, moves on to his grades, digresses to the reasons for poor grades, and then returns to the discussion of grades. The note on the top of page 4 ("I didn't get time to copy my last paragraph") shows that the writer perhaps conceived the process of revision as that of merely recopying. Clearly, the lack of overall plan for composition is evinced in this sample.

Here is the writer's post-instruction sample:



is I consider a nomination for the Teacher Excellence Award, one person clearly stands out in my mind. Jane Doe represents all the attributes that I expect in an excellent teacher.

First of all, Ms. Doe has good rapport with her students. They respect her and she respects them as individuals. Discipline is not a problem in her classroom. She provides a positive learning climate for her pupils. Basic

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skills are emphasized, but in a creative way. Students in Mr. Doe's fourth grade are taught to think. They use higher level thinking skills because of her techniques of teaching and questioning. Her students write books, produce plays, and work in discovery centers while learning the essentials. Learning is fun in her class. Students fondly recall experiences for many years after leaving her class.

2

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In addition, Jane Doe continually works to upgrade her skills in teaching. She attends many classes and workshops voluntarily on her own time to learn new ideas or improve her teaching techniques. She is especially interested in the gifted/talented student and has had much training in this area. She uses the knowledge she has gained in this area, not only to benefit

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the gifted / talented students;
but her average students as well.

Another thing that impresses
me about Jane Doe is that she
still finds time to become involved
in the activities at school. She
is an active member of the
Parent-Teacher Action Council which
helps plan and direct many of
our local school concerns. She
attends the Parent-Teacher Organiza-
tion meetings and supports all
local school activities. She in-

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values parents in her own classroom planning and activities. Her colleagues respect her and value her opinions. She is supportive of her fellow teachers and is willing to help them when needed. She also encourages them by supporting their endeavors.

Because of her reputation of excellence in the classroom, Mrs. Doe has been asked to teach several workshops in

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our district and for teacher education classes at Texas Christians University. This is done willingly, even though it takes many hours of her valuable time and is usually done without compensation. She also has published several articles in educational magazines and has won awards for her creative teaching.

When I review all of Jane Doe's accomplishments

6

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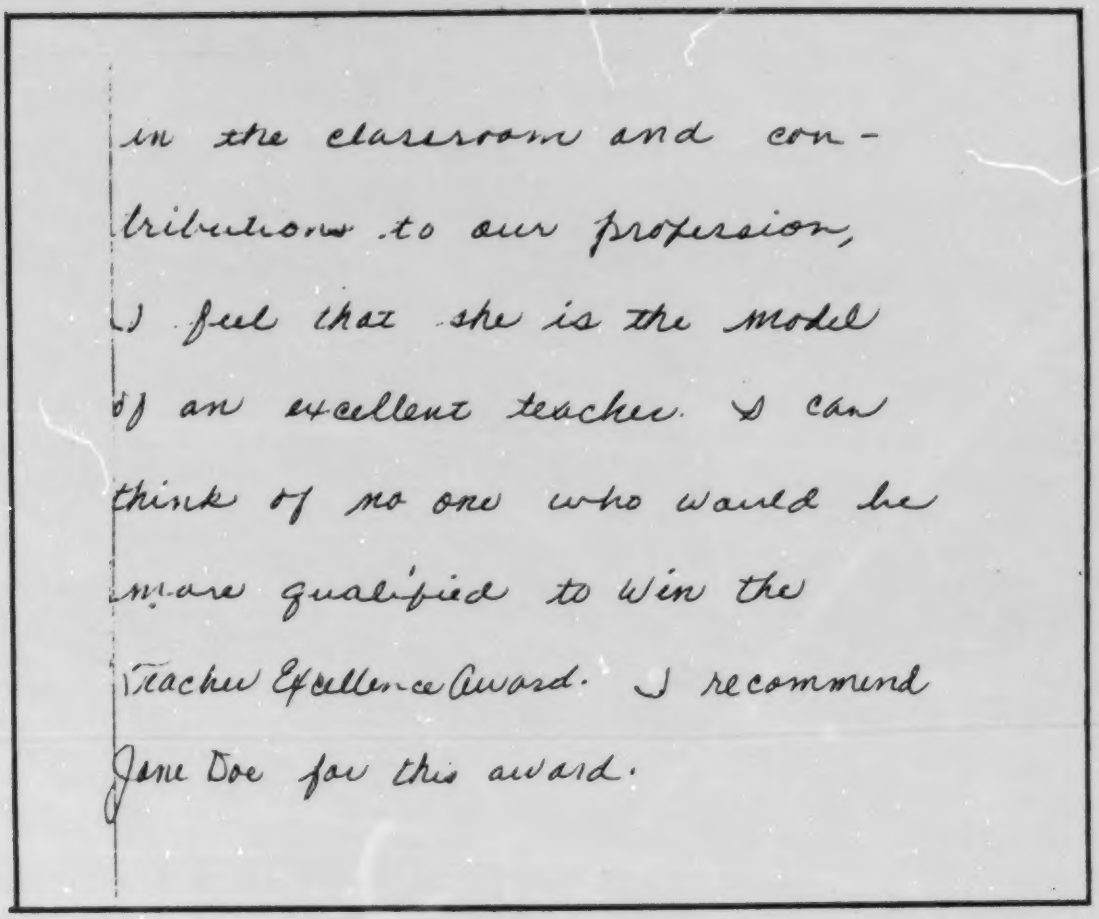
in the classroom and contributions to our profession, I feel that she is the model of an excellent teacher. I can think of no one who would be more qualified to win the Teacher Excellence Award. I recommend Jane Doe for this award.

Again, there is an increased length here, but this has been combined with a clear sense of organizational strategy. The writer appears to be poised as the reader is led to the conclusion through precise transitions. In place of the ending confusion of the earlier paper is a summary of conclusions that inductively

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structure the final recommendation. In its execution and fluency of writing, this post-instruction paper drew two perfect scores of 6.

Obviously, the two previous writers started out with adequate skills which were enhanced and refined under instruction. The final pre-instruction paper, though, was one of the weakest in the sample, drawing only a combined score of 4 (2 + 2):

Dear Program Committee,

I recommend that my student Kay [redacted] is enrolled in your special program for students who have serious learning disabilities. Kay is fairly responsive when I work with her privately, however, when she has to perform independently she stares at her materials, bites her nails, and rubs her eyes in frustration.

Kay is a hard worker and she needs a program that can give her more individual attention than our regular classroom setting will allow. I believe that your special program will give her more self-confidence and a higher level of independence to achieve success in the classroom.

Sincerely,
Ms [redacted]

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The brevity of the piece, and the lack of exact examples, suggest patterns that we often associate with beginning writers needing assistance with their academic skills.

Below is the writer's post-instructional sample:

Dear Board Members,

I have been informed that you are recognizing outstanding work by district personnel. The person I would like to nominate has demonstrated excellence in teaching. I recommend that Montego [redacted] should recieve this award. He is knowledgeable, organized, respectable, responsible, and humorous. At the beginning of his teaching career he seaved as an instructional resource teacher. Careful always to be fair but firm, he worked hard to meet the needs of all of his students by pretesting them and working with them individually.

He has established rapport with parents by contacting them often and with his students by laughing with them but never at them. Montego has worked deligently in his community by volunteering his services of free tutoring on Saturdays at the Madden Community Center. At Develow Elementary School he holds the positions of School Representative, Team Leader, and Chairman of the Management Team. In addition to his dedication to his building level assignments, he is an active member of N.E.A., F.W.C.F.A., and F.S.F.A., after representing his district

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at State and National meetings. After receiving his Masters Degree in Education at Texas Christian University, he continues to attend workshops, inservices, and seminars to expand his knowledge and make him a more effective teacher. Montego [redacted] believes that to be a good teacher one must plan your work and work your plan. Montego [redacted], an outstanding educator and a true example of leadership.

That there has been a vast improvement here--5 points--is indicated by the paper's score of 9 (4 + 5). The pre-instruction awkwardness is almost totally absent from the paper. There is a much more sophisticated sense of word choice, and the sentence patterns themselves are more sophisticated. The use of example is much more vivid, and the final statement--an effective use of an appositive--has a very effective, nearly aphoristic quality.

Of course, the previous examples are isolated choices, but we do feel that they indicate the nature of improvements that we were aiming for in the program: a shift from circular, unorganized, redundant patterns of thought to linear, coherent, highly structured patterns of composition.

Conclusion

As the Selected Bibliography at the end of this section of the report indicates, interest in the holistic methods of

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evaluating writing is both widespread and current. We would speculate that the rise of this method is due to the increased tendencies in American education to certify the competency of educators. As more administrators in school systems as well as in universities find that graduates of academic programs are deficient in writing skills, instruments through which abilities may be measured will become more widespread.

In our present study, we found the direct assessment of writing thoroughly reliable and valid, as well as rewarding. After two days of intensive effort, the readers were still enthusiastic about their work; indeed, the very nature of the process itself promotes communalism and communication. Most importantly, though, holisticism is useful in that it seeks not to punish writers for their errors but rather to reward them for their skills. It is this shift away from primary-trait scoring, away from the naive view that writing is merely the correct use of grammar and mechanics, that is most significant.

In studies such as George L. Dillon's Constructing Texts: Elements of Composition and Style (1981) and Walter Ong's Literacy and Orality: The Technologizing of the Word (1982), the point is successfully made that writing is a very complex, very subtle skill, a technology that must be learned. Unlike orality, written literacy must be learned. The idea that there was once an America in which all people could write has been shown to be a myth, a picture of an idyllic world that never

existed. The very texts that are so often shown to be indicators of how writing was taught The New England Primer, Webster's Blue Backed Speller, and the McGuffey Readers--were all keyed to oratorial performances in an America that was largely rural and did not seek to educate all of its population. In the America of the last twenty years, the situation has changed immeasureably as we now seek to offer the promises of democracy, especially the promises of an education, to all people. As educators have sought out students who would not have formerly had the opportunity of an education, they have discovered the difficulty of the task at hand, particularly the difficulties of teaching and evaluating writing.

In this historical process, one realization has become readily apparent: writing is not a natural act. Rather it is a learned behavior that, once learned, alters the methods of thought of the writer. The linear, embedded, precisely argumentative consciousness that we associate with an education is possible only through the learned ability to write, the ability to commit ideas to paper, to refine them, and to communicate them.

In our holistic evaluation of writing development, we were aware that we were doing more than merely testing the grammar and mechanics of a few isolated teachers. Instead, we realized that we were looking into a group of educators who had undergone a planned process of awareness regarding the importance of the act of writing and had improved some of their own writing along the way.

One final observation. In the evaluation of writing, it becomes clear that correctness follows commitment. Throughout our program, we strove to instigate informed discussion about the nature of writing. If our participants improved at all, it is because they became firmly convinced of the necessity of learning to write, a skill without which we become oppressed within our own culture. As our writers became committed to the writing process, their correctness--indicated in such areas as fluency, exact use of grammar, mechanics, and word choice, and overall logical structure--increased. Hence, <u>their writing abilities advanced not through the employment of an arbitrary system of rules but rather because the participants had become engaged in an intellectually challenging and vital process.</u>

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PARTICIPANTS' ASSESSMENT OF THE WORKSHOP

The writing skills of the participants as a group were already exceptional when they volunteered for the workshop. Yet almost all indicated that they were more comfortable with writing tasks and felt greater confidence in their abilities at the conclusion of the sessions. On three different sets of instruments, the data support this analysis.

Measure of Writing Apprehension Scale

The participants were pre- and post-tested on the same instrument for their feelings of apprehension when they faced a task involving writing. They showed a significant decrease in anxiety on the post-test even though their scores on the pre-test are generally low in comparison to most populations. The instrument contained twenty-six statements, each with a five point scale of responses from 5 as the highest degree of apprehension to 1 as the lowest.

SUBJECT/GRADE TAUGHT_____

MEASURE OF WRITING APPREHENSION

Directions: Below are a series of statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the abbreviation which best describes your opinion about the statement. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I avoid writing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.	I look forward to writing down my ideas	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6.	Handing in a composition makes me feel good.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	My mind seems to go blank when I start work on a composition	SA	A	U	D	SD

8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for publication.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. I would like to write my ideas down.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11. I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas in writing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. I'm nervous about writing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. People seem to enjoy what I write.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. I enjoy writing.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. Writing is a lot of fun.	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	SA	A	U	D	SD

19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.	SA	A	U	D	SD
22. When I hand in a composition I know I'm going to do poorly.	SA	A	U	D	SD
23. It's easy for me to write good composition.	SA	A	U	D	SD
24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.	SA	A	U	D	SD
25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	SA	A	U	D	SD
26. I'm no good at writing.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Analysis of Decrease in Apprehension

The test contained 26 items. The total possible range of scores was 26 - 130, or 104 points.

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Mean Score	64.0	54.9	9.1 decrease
Median Score	62.0	54.0	8.0 decrease
Range	32 - 104	27 - 95	
Standard Deviation	18.2	13.9	

T - test for correlated sample:

t = 3.48

data field = 159

probability of error = $<.001$

Scale for Negative Attitude toward Writers and Writing

The participants were pre- and post-tested on the identical instrument for their attitude toward writing. They showed a significant decrease in negative attitudes on the post-test although their scores on the pre-test are generally low in comparison to most populations.

The instrument contained twenty items. Ratings on each item were based on a 5 point scale with a score of 5 as the most negative attitude and 1 as the lowest.

SUBJECT/GRADE TAUGHT_____

ATTITUDE SCALE: WRITERS AND WRITING

Directions: For each of the following statements about writers and writing, encircle the abbreviations for the words which best describe your opinion about the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Trying to write poetic language is a waste of time to me.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. I'd like to be a writer for a newspaper.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. I'd rather do almost anything than write a scene for a play.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. Writing poems seems kind of useless to me.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. I believe it is necessary to revise the sentences in my writing so that they are varied; some short, some long, and so forth.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. I admire writers of fiction.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. Effective writers use many general terms and abstractions.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. I like to write something every day.	SA	A	U	D	SD

9. I believe the poet is a valuable member of society.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. I would like to be able to write poems that are published.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11. I believe it is necessary to revise what I write.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Being able to write a short story isn't one of the things that I want to do in life.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. I enjoy writing figurative language like similes, metaphors, and personification.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. I like to write about people I know well.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. I would like to be able to write a short story that could be published.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. The writer who uses those phrases developed over the years appeals to more people.	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. The ideas in writing are important, not the kinds of sentences used.	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. The best writing is produced in the first draft.	SA	A	U	D	SD

19. Once I have written down what I have to say, I don't want to go over it again.	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. I don't ever write anything unless I am forced to.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Analysis of Decrease in Negative Attitude toward Writers and Writing

The test contained 20 items. The total possible range of scores was 20 - 100, or 80 points.

	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
Mean Score	43.3	38.5	5.0 decrease
Median Score	44.0	38.0	6.0 decrease
Range	23 - 64	14 - 58	
Standard Deviation	9.0	9.0	

T - test for correlated sample:

t = 3.26

data field = 145

probability of error = $<.001$

Post Assessment of the Writing Skills Workshop

At the end of the five sessions, the participants were tested for their assessment of the impact of the writing skills workshop.

The instrument was divided into 2 parts. The first part contained 25 items, the second 8.

The following material shows both the instrument and the percentage of participants responding to each score on the assessment.

% OF PARTICIPANTS RESPONDING TO EACH SCORE ON THE ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT/GRADE TAUGHT_____

POST ASSESSMENT OF WRITING AND REASONING SKILLS WORKSHOP

Directions: Below are a series of statements about what you learned from the workshop. Please indicate the degree to which each statement identifies how you feel at this time. Thank you for your cooperation.

I. IN THE WORKSHOP, I IMPROVED MY ABILITY

	Very Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All	Not Relevant
1. to define an issue to write about.	60.0%	35.0%	3.7%	1.2%	
2. to come up with ideas for use in writing.	81.3%	11.2%	7.5%		
3. to state a main idea.	31.3%	53.7%	12.5%	1.2%	1.2%
4. to support my main ideas.	45.7%	44.4%	7.4%	1.2%	1.2%
5. to use appropriate details.	70.4%	25.9%	3.7%		
6. to locate sources of details.	41.2%	47.5%	10.0%	1.2%	
7. to organize my papers.	45.7%	44.4%	8.6%		1.2%
8. to use appropriately varied tones in writing.	42.5%	41.2%	12.5%	3.7%	
9. to choose words that say what I mean.	71.6%	17.3%	9.9%	1.2%	
10. to plan papers before I write.	51.9%	35.4%	10.1%	2.5%	

	Very Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All	Not Relevant
11. to revise my papers.	71.6%	27.2%	1.2%		
12. to revise the organization of my papers.	49.4%	48.1%	1.3%	1.3%	
13. to revise my sentences.	66.7%	29.6%	3.7%		
14. to revise my ideas.	55.7%	35.4%	8.9%		
15. to correct my own mistakes in punctuation and grammar.	26.9%	41.0%	16.7%	10.3%	5.1%
16. to use a dictionary when needed.	22.8%	31.6%	16.5%	15.2%	13.9%
17. to adjust my writing style according to the needs of my teachers.	23.9%	33.8%	11.3%	16.9%	14.1%
18. to adjust my writing style according to the needs of my readers.	54.8%	34.2%	[illegible].1%	4.1%	2.7%
19. to learn new words.	35.2%	31.0%	15.5%	11.3%	7.0%
20. to take essay tests.	16.9%	33.8%	15.5%	16.9%	16.9%
21. to judge my own writing.	54.4%	44.4%	2.8%	1.4%	
22. to judge other student's writings.	52.1%	39.7%	8.2%		
23. to state for myself questions about my problems in writing.	56.2%	41.1%	2.7%		
24. to use other people's comments to improve my writing.	79.6%	19.2%	1.4%		

	Very Much	Somewhat	A Little	Not At All	Not Relevant
25. to write in other courses.	38.0%	36.6%	8.5%	5.6%	11.3%

II. AFTER COMPLETING THIS WORKSHOP,

1. I am better able to do my writing assignments.	68.5%	24.7%	4.1%		2.7%
2. I am more willing to undertake writing tasks.	74.0%	17.8%	5.5%	2.7%	
3. I have increased confidence in myself as a writer.	79.5%	13.7%	4.1%	2.7%	
4. I am more willing to take jobs that require writing.	56.9%	30.6%	4.2%	2.8%	5.6%
5. I am more willing to take courses that require writing.	69.9%	16.4%	8.2%		5.5%
6. writing helps me learn.	84.9%	12.3%	2.7%		
7. writing helps me clarify my ideas.	83.6%	15.1%	1.4%		
8. the evaluation of my writing is fair.	70.8%	22.2%	1.4%	1.4%	4.2%

Conclusions

On all three sets of instruments, the participants indicated the beneficial effects of the workshop. They entered with exceptional skills, yet still believed they had improved a great deal after the sessions.

LEARNING LOGS

Another important measure of the impact of the five-week workshops appears in the learning logs. At the end of each session -- after the participants had heard the presenter, had taken part in activities, had written and shared short exercise compositions in small groups, and had submitted a more extended piece of writing they had worked on during the week to a structured editing and response group -- they wrote an entry in a learning log.

The audience for the entries was the coordinator for each large workshop group, Sally Hampton, Charles Mazer, and Wayne Musgrove, who responded in writing to all the entries each week. Thus the logs became dialogues between the project staff and the participants, a crucial link absent in most workshop formats.

Participants could write about virtually any part of the program they chose to consider:

- -A summary of the major points of the session
- -Feelings about writing and about being required to read a piece of writing in a response group
- -Responses to the presenter's delivery, activities, materials and focus
- -Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the physical environment of the workshop setting
- -Attempts to improve their teaching through ideas gained in the sessions
- -Frustrations and hopes for improving their individual skills in writing and reasoning
- -Questions about any part of the program

Each entry was a personalized response, free from the restraints of the typical weekly workshop evaluation sheet and free from the typical canned, clichéd responses those sheets elicit. The act of writing a learning log entry reinforced the central idea of the workshop itself -- writing as a way of expression of ideas and feeling, as the best way for thoughtful, planned exchanges.

Emerging Patterns of Growth

All participants wrote logs every week, and almost every log reflects growth in one or more major ways:

- -An increasing confidence about taking on writing tasks
- -An increasing comfort with reading and sharing writing in response and editing groups
- -A new or renewed interest in writing as an effective method for communicating with friends, colleagues, students, agencies, and organizations
- -A new or renewed interest in writing as a method for expressing feelings and ideas for personal growth
- -A new or renewed commitment to teaching writing as a way for students to learn and to share dialogues with the teacher, with each other, and with other audiences
- -An overall excitement about the intellectual and emotional stimulation of working in both large and small groups, of interacting with -- not just listening to -- presenters who all are or have been public school teachers, and of taking risks by sharing themselves through writing

The group coordinators noted the expansions of enthusiasm and abilities each week, and they responded by answering

questions, making suggestions for further exploration, and by reinforcing growth.

The logs best stand for themselves. We have provided excerpts from many of them which illustrate these various kinds of expanding realizations about the worth of writing.

Learning Log Excerpts

Participants generally wrote one to one and a half pages each week. The following selections represent only portions of these longer entries.

> Week 1:
> When I first walked in this morning, I started to feel a bit threatened about what kind of writing I would be expected to do. Mainly I was afraid I wouldn't be able to think of anything to write about. After jotting down facts and memories (part of today's program), I had all kinds of ideas to write about. I was okay!
>
> Week 2:
> As this class progresses, I am realizing more and more what a special opportunity this is for me to improve my writing skills. My own writing has caused me to think and clarify my own thoughts.
>
> Week 3:
> Listening to Cochran last week has given me confidence to write in my own style. As I become aware of writing to a specific audience, my writing will surely improve.
>
> I have had lots of good experiences in my life and I feel compelled to write about them, but until now I have not felt I had the skills.
>
> Week 4:
> I felt today was especially helpful to me with my own writing. I am writing a daily journal now and it is helpful to me.

Week 5:
This class has given me confidence and encouragement.

Week 1:
I have particularly enjoyed the small groups; the sharing made me feel very comfortable. It helped alleviate some of the fears that I and others had about our writing.

Week 2:
I began to see my own writing and what I could do to improve.

Week 3:
I'm finding that I'm less afraid -- still not sure I know how but I'm getting there. Small group as usual was supportive and informative.

Week 4:
Either writing is getting easier or the fear is going away.

Week 5:
This was the best session. The writings reflect real experiences and real people. Keep up the good work.

Week 1:
I would like to improve my own personal writing.

Week 2:
I liked the emphasis on specifics. I find myself using generalization and jargon all the time. I'm going to work on improving my writing in this area. The writing group is positive and supportive, and I don't feel threatened reading my writing.

Week 4:
This was the most helpful of the sessions in terms of practical teaching ideas.

I wonder how my own writing would be if the teachers I had used this approach. Removing the threat is the most important thing!

Week 5:
I've learned a lot today and during the entire workshop. I am more confident about my own writing and ways to improve it.

I am using several of the ideas we have learned in working with my class. I can see an improvement in their confidence about writing and in their ability to put ideas on paper.

The group was helpful and made sharing our writing much easier.

Thanks for a fun time.

Week 1:
After today's session I do feel more relaxed about the coming week's assignments. I have had mixed feelings about this class; but I think I will benefit from it. I need this for my own benefit rather than use in my classroom.

Week 2:
The discussions with my peers have definitely built up my confidence in writing. I have never had a writing course!

Week 3:
I have enjoyed the small group participation; discussing each writing has been the highlight of the day. I hope to spend more time this week in developing the skills that Jim Gray discussed.

Week 4:
Each week has been more enlightening (as we learn) "more tricks of the trade." My style and methods of writing have changed throughout the last few weeks -- I hope for the better!

Week 4:
I learned about the revision process today. Jan reviewed the process in a step-by-step manner and helped me individually as well. She gave some very useful tips on grading and correcting rough drafts. I appreciated the training and experience of the small editorial groups. I learned methods and techniques of revision that will help me improve my teaching skills.

Week 5:
I learned that we should strive to help students become self-editors through groups. I now realize that we must focus on one error pattern at a time, providing practice within a group until their correct responses are automatic.

I needed a structured guideline to take to my class, and Keith handed out a copy of a five-step writing process which emphasized exploring, planning, drafting, revising, and sharing.

I enjoyed reading and listening to pieces of writing because it helped me understand and appreciate a communication process that I rarely use. I feel good about the knowledge I acquired through this workshop because finally everything has come together for me. This workshop has helped me become a more effective teacher for my students.

Week 2:
As we work I wish, in a way, this workshop would last longer. I wonder if the presenters realize the impact they are making on us teachers, especially me, as I know how tremendously I became uplifted today and last Saturday by the training and sharing.

There appears to be a correlation between writing and feelings; the more I write about the topics, the more I feel. I am happy to have direction and sharing to keep in place these insights and thoughts.

Week 3:
Today was a "no pain -- no gain" day. When I experience difficulty, I tell myself that I am learning new things, and therefore must experience a lack of comfort in order to grow.

We read our pieces, nervously expressing apologies for their poor quality as it seemed we felt they could be much better, especially after today's instruction and enlightenment.

I will rewrite this week's piece and try to polish it. I hope to read it again to our group with less hesitation. I look forward to their feedback as the group members are supportive and interested.

We all want to write better and have the common goal of becoming more experienced and confident in writing.

Week 4:
Thoughts starting to mesh, long buried techniques, expression, camaraderie between new friends trying to support, all these particulars creep into the thoughts of this writer as I try not to feel disappointment at the workshop's end.

We aren't children. We have learned already, have been trained and corrected. Like a house well built but in need of repair, I eagerly await the suggestions and new ways of better expressing myself and reaching my long term goal, publishing a short piece of writing.

Week 1:
If I could force myself to continue writing, I believe I could produce something worthwhile out of it -- a sketch or essay or story, perhaps. My problem is a reluctance to put the words from my head on paper. I am hoping this workshop will help me overcome this difficulty.

Week 2:
Today's session was stimulating and enjoyable. Thank you for what you are giving us.

Week 4:
The ideas on revision were very helpful. I'll put them into operation next week with my 10th graders. I have been using Jim Gray's ideas this past week and am well pleased with the results. Thanks a million for both sessions. It was just what I needed.

The small group divided into three or four people. It was 100% better. All of us had time for reading and discussing this week. I got some useful feedback.

Week 5:
This workshop has done more for me than any other workshop I have ever attended. I was not bored one time. My writing has improved tremendously, as has the writing of the other participants. I am persuaded of the effectiveness of the techniques in my own writing and in what I have tried in the classroom. Thank you for a most profitable 30 hours.

Week 1:
I learned at least two things today: (1) Teaching writing can be fun. (2) Teaching writing can be done almost painlessly and students can learn to write.

Week 3:
I enjoy the writing groups because you get feedback from a variety of viewpoints. I find the groups helpful and very serious about what they say. They want to tell you what is good about your paper. They very tactfully tell you what might be changed. The groups introduce you to other people. It's nice to know other people, their hopes, dreams, problems, and to reinforce what's good about people and about teaching. I'll use the idea of groups many times because they have been a positive experience for me.

Week 4:
We heard good solid material to use to help students improve their writing. The editing groups and how to set them up is going to be quite effective. In addition to improving writing, the groups will help put them in touch with each other. I really enjoyed the tips and experience of Jan. She made it all seem so easy and so exciting.

Our writing group was full of help and positive feedback as always. The group helps me grow.

Mapping is an excellent way to outline. It is easy to understand and the kids can see it. I liked the way he reinforced what the others have said.

It was excellent reinforcement coupled with practical advice.

Week 1:
I was impressed with the varied styles of writing within my group of five people. Using basically the same subject area some teachers gave detailed descriptions of people who influenced their teaching, while others were less specific. Yet, all five had strong statements as to why they chose teaching as a career.

Week 2:
The speaker was informative and interesting. Bob Cochran emphasized the importance of using detail, choosing words familiar to the writer and being concise. Recognize the audience to whom you are writing and address the issues accordingly. Excellent presentation!

Group Six worked diligently. I appreciated the fact that we stayed on task, yet interjected humor in the constructive criticism of our work. Great day!

Week 4:
The group is compatible; criticism is constructive and useful. Some of the ideas, shared responses have benefited my rewriting improving my skills.

Today's information is applicable to my teaching; beneficial to all levels. My third graders will be able to edit their health papers utilizing the small group concept. Sharing in the correction process with peers should instill confidence.

Week 5:
The writing process introduced by Keith Caldwell clarifies some of the instruction from the last three weeks. I understand why he was scheduled for the first session.

My group has been encouraging and understanding. We have decided to be supportive of one another in future writings -- exchanged addresses and phone numbers. This workshop has encouraged me to use more writing in classes and to do more personal writing.

Week 2:
The group I was assigned to is very compatible. In fact, I believe there was a genuine concern for people's feelings. Remarks were positive and helpful.

Week 5:
I received several ideas today that I can pass on to our teachers (mapping, clustering, the writing process).

This workshop has been interesting and helpful.

I have a positive attitude now toward writing. I have developed a better self concept in regard to my own writing ability.

Week 1:
I am enthusiastic about this workshop. I started to say "excited," but I thought I might sound over-zealous.

I feel that this workshop will be very helpful for me and my students.

The ability to communicate ideas and feelings through writing is such a crucial one.

Week 2:
The writing groups were helpful today. I was especially moved by Liz Tamayo's piece of writing -- she expressed herself beautifully and I could really empathize with the situation she recounted.

Week 3:
Today was great! I really got a lot out of Jim Gray's presentation. I am especially pleased with the hand-out sheets. I know that these patterns will help me with my own writing and will also benefit my students.

It was good to confer with my small group again this week.

Week 4:
The revising and proofreading hints will be very useful in working with students' writing.

Week 5:
Keith Caldwell's dry wit is very entertaining. The information and hand-outs on mapping and clustering will be used in my classes. I'm glad that he had us write the answers to the three questions. I had never really thought much about why I want to write -- at least I had never written the reasons down.

I thoroughly enjoyed our reading our selections aloud. This workshop has been a very positive experience for me. I have learned a lot that will help me with my students' writing. I'm really glad that my own interest in writing has been re-ignited.

Week 1:
I enjoyed the experience of writing and sharing.

Week 2:
I learned a lot about writing for a particular audience. It was very apparent from his hand-outs that the same subject can be written for vastly different audiences. He demonstrated that the whole approach must be different.

My writing group is an accomplished group, I believe. I like their writing as well as my own and believe the sharing is valuable. I'm willing to take a risk and try a writing style I have not developed but would like to be able to do.

Week 3:
Every time an in-class assignment is given, I have an initial panic thinking I won't be able to say or think of anything at all. Afterwards -- 10 minutes or so -- I am able to get an idea and by the time we are getting finished, I have only half finished my piece. I can see that practice will help.

Week 4:
I felt the workshop and the revision of my work in the writing group were productive today.

One result of this workshop, for me, has been a desire to write more letters to my family rather than call on the phone. Long ago, I never called at all because I couldn't afford it. My family always enjoyed receiving my letters, 'books' my mother called them. Going to work full time and acquiring enough resources to pay for phone calls has stolen the motivation for me to write. I hope to schedule time to do writing for myself and family once again.

Week 1:
It was personally comforting to realize I did have enough thoughts on the suggested subject to write as directed. To touch one's experience(s) gives one something to write about, thus overcoming the intimidating aspect of the blank page. The pleasantness of writing and of sharing written words without correction or reference to writing "rules" was impressive -- it allowed thoughts to continue to surface. With this in mind I can feel freer about beginning to put something on paper.

Week 2:
What fun! The time elapsed seemed like one hour this morning and half an hour this afternoon.

As a teacher I've had to sit in in-service classes, meetings, etc. and cringe at the level of "teaching" imposed upon the captive audience. One was so bored, so incensed by the monotony, the mediocre content, the endless droning of voice --

Today the mind was excited. One had to laugh, to think, to respond.

One respects the vitality, the energy displayed. Underlying was a seriousness of purpose and solid organization.

Week 3:
Today was enlightening, so insightful into the mechanics and style which has escaped me. I shall now be "analyzing" the sentence structure of my latest library book.

The prof was a very good teacher -- excellent presentation and preparation.

The small group has given me some affirmation, some nice strokes, about my piece. I am listening to them with the idea of what can be strengthened.

Week 4:
Defining the processes into development and proof-reading clarified the procedure in my thinking.

I am pleased that each Saturday has related to and extended the subject matter of the previous session -- my interest level remains high.

Our group interchange has grown freer and I think we genuinely asked for help today.

Week 5:
It has been an enriching experience to be in these sessions, to learn from teachers and participants alike. The revelation of human experience in the shared writings has been a stimulus to thinking and provided moments of laughter and some of more serious consideration.

After being with young children so constantly I loved being immersed with adults who shared a common interest.

Week 1:
I received a number of good ideas concerning improving my own writing and how to encourage students to write and to improve their writing.

The most valuable tool from today's session would be that as a teacher I must be positive in my corrections.

Week 4:
I never dreamed that I could enjoy an experience so much, especially when I have spent the days in between sessions not wanting to give up my time on Saturdays.

I gained some valuable tips on selecting writing topics for students (and myself).

Week 1:
Much of today's activity was a review or re-learning process for me, reminding me of things I should use regularly but have forgotten. Specifically, suggestions for pre-writing such as "I remember...," mapping, and using specific questions will be very helpful in my teaching -- especially next week, for I am in the middle of working with essay writing.

I was pleasantly surprised at how easily I began to write and look forward to some professional evaluation. Sharing in small group was enlightening, but my group had trouble staying with the assignment, wanting instead to swap "war stories." I did begin to see some of the problem with my own rambling rough drafts, which -- like my conversation -- sometimes never quite arrive at the point.

Week 2:
First, I used the mapping technique reviewed last week with some success in my English class to prepare the students for essay writing.

Rebekah Caplan is a delightful, stimulating presenter. I can use many of her techniques, especially the "show, not tell," and her methods for comparison/contrast.

Today's groups were both vastly superior in tone to that I experienced last week. I am very impressed with the quality of writing I am hearing, and at the same time I am feeling less intimidated about my own. It's fun to do some writing again, and critiques are most helpful.

Hope the rest of the sessions are as stimulating as today's!

Week 3:
Thank you for your thoughtful reply to last week's comments. I appreciate your sensitivity and the evidence that you really read what I wrote. I am reminded of how much feedback means to my students, for I am too often guilty of slow responses to their written work.

Today Glenn Irvin and his presentation were terrific. He tailored his presentation to the needs of our group, and obviously enjoyed what he was doing. His enthusiasm is contagious, and I know I will be able to make far better use of sentence combining than I have before.

I am beginning to feel really good about my own writing. I know that sometimes the creative juices really flow, as mine did today; I am also aware of ups and downs in my own pieces. Some are really good; some, fair; some, trash; others, deserving reworking. I actually shared some writing with a colleague I admire, to whom I could not have shown ANYTHING three weeks ago, for fear of being embarrassed or professionally too vulnerable.

This workshop is proving to be the most stimulating, productive professional activity I have been part of in years. I'm having fun learning!

Week 4:
Pat McGrath provided some very helpful clues for revising and editing which I know I can use in class. Much of what she said about grading and "correcting" confirms what experience has taught me, and I appreciate the reinforcement.

I also appreciate my group's assistance in revising a new piece I wrote for today. I think we're beginning to get the hang of creative group criticism.

I want to keep doing this workshop!

Week 5:
Today's workshop brought to my awareness the variety of approaches people have to writing, and the need to make allowances for them all. Also I became more

conscious of the relationship between writing and learning. Especially did I find the sharing of writing to be a strong experience: it stimulated my thinking of things I want to write; and it led me to a renewed respect for my professional peers.

For me, this workshop needed no improvement. Consultants' flexibility and the relaxed, trusting atmosphere we developed resulted in a marvelous workshop.

I think another meeting -- especially of the same groups -- for reinforcement would be valuable.

Overall, the workshop provided me with a process for teaching writing effectively, along with some specific suggestions.

I am grateful for a most productive and stimulating workshop.

One thing I have learned is to trust my editing group and to be open to their comments. My group is a good mix of people I have known for years and people I did not know before, making their responses really valuable to me. I do need a sounding board (and always have) at some point in my writing process. Feedback helps.

Week 1:
I learned today that learning by doing is probably the only way. I was amazed at the way the words poured out onto the paper, and at how anxious I was to give these words life by reading them. I learned that prewriting may be a part of writing that I have not spent enough time on with my students. I've begun to look at writing as a way to know others.

Confidence in myself was the most important part of today's lesson. I feel challenged to write better <u>for myself</u>. Is everyone a closet writer? I loved today.

For following sessions, please address revising.

Week 2:
I came away with some concrete ideas for my classroom and a fair degree of enthusiasm for them.

I like the idea of showing, not telling and would like some more practice at it. I think it would help me guide my students.

Week 3:
I was very impressed with the "rhythm reading and writing" method. I think that even my special education students could handle this.

Week 4:
This session addressed my request for help in revising. This session and the first were the most beneficial to me as a writer. The other two were more helpful from a teaching standpoint.

The help in editing today will be reflected in my "perfect" paper next week. I know, at least, that the dead verbs are now partially revived.

The presenter this week was the best. She is a fine teacher (my highest compliment).

Week 5:
The inspiration to think, write, and share my work was the most powerful aspect of the workshop. The editing group was an incredible help and just great fun.

Bill Strong's work was very helpful in dealing with writing in my area. I felt his ideas were most applicable to special education.

Learning by doing is sometimes a revelation for us and then learning to prepare for that exercise helps us take it back to the classroom.

Teachers need the confidence in their own work that these lessons inspire.

One more thing: These colleagues were bright, witty, kind, and clever.

Week 1:
I learned today that I am not a terrible writer, but there is certainly room for improvement! The selection we wrote about today was not difficult, and I enjoyed reliving some childhood experiences. I must learn to be more direct in my writing and forget about what I thought was "expected."

I am looking forward to writing my selection for next week. I plan to use more pre-writing activities than I have in the past. This should be interesting and a challenge.

Week 3:
Wonderful day -- Bill Strong is excellent. His ideas are "right-on." I can't wait to see if I can put them to good use for myself and my students.

Writing group is super, good friends and good teachers. They really are trying to improve and give us feedback.

Week 5:
I was truly overwhelmed by the group's writing ability. I am surrounded by wonderfully competent professionals.

The grouping by grade level was excellent, more should be done in the future. Needs on various grade levels range widely.

The most powerful moment, of course, was the reading of papers. Next, I suppose, I enjoyed hearing ideas from Mary K. and Bill Strong. Dot was exceptional, too. All the presenters made a special effort to take the pressure off of us -- that helped.

I am going to make every effort to introduce as many of these practices and theories in my classroom.

Week 1:
I did acquire a renewed excitement about writing and teaching writing. I did think the suggestion of writing questions rather than simply putting down meaningless phrases such as "awkward," "unclear," and "vague" was a good one. I guess I did learn again that composition can be taught and can be taught in

such a way that long lasting effects esult.

Week 2:
The writing groups are fantastic, and the one I'm in is very supportive, and I've been able to steal many ideas. I think the writing/editing times are the most productive.

I loved the mapping concept and want to use it in my class.

Overall, it was another very profitable time!

Week 3:
The most profitable one yet! Bill gave us valuable ideas and excellent models. I am motivated about teaching writing. I can see how Bill's sentence combining can be unthreatening to the students in my class.

The writing/editing group is superb. Together, we have created some excellent pieces of writing: we've been able to encourage each other, and we have been able to offer concrete ideas for improvement.

I can't wait to share with some of my colleagues outside English how they can use sentence combining to teach their lessons.

Week 4:
I am stunned with the excitement I feel about writing and teaching writing. Dot's "cosmetic" revision techniques brought incredible results in my writing pieces. It is almost like seeing my work in black and white, then suddenly having it bathed in showers of vibrant colors. What I thought were mundane sentences now thrill me with the rich details and "killer" verbs.

Week 5:
The group discussion about our different writing processes was not only profitable but also amazing. I didn't realize how many similar processes we share together. I was glad to get the list down on paper. Sharing our writing pieces made me proud of my editing group members. What fun to see how far we all have come in writing skills and confidence. My hope is that I can transfer this happiness and safety in writing to my own students. Writing doesn't have to be isolated. Together, it can be a great

confidence booster and such a refreshing creative outlet.

I do think it would be helpful next time to spend one day learning how to incorporate all this into the classroom and into a building-level writing program that cuts across discipline lines. A session on "Here's how to start a writing program from the beginning of school" could tie everything together.

Week 1:
I'm excited about this workshop. The writing process is the thinking process. If we can teach the one there is hope that we will see results in the other.

Week 2:
The editing group is most rewarding. I love hearing the pieces of writing from the class -- especially the Valentine/Christmas papers. I like having to write and objectively seeing some who write better and some who write not as well as I.

Week 3:
This interests me! I have played around with sentence combining for years with students, but now I see the whole picture. I'd like to do a project with this next school year. I'll have to think about how to set it up. Maybe during the summer I can develop something. So far, I've just touched the very edge of what can be done. I'm interested in developing some materials for literature and vocabulary as well as for grammar that could then develop into compositions.

Week 5:
I appreciated the workshop and it clarified a lot of notions about writing.

The consultants were very good. I hope I get to spend more time with them at other workshops.

I'm impressed with the pieces that were read today. What creative, articulate people we are! I guess I just crave these opportunities to be creative since classroom teaching these days seems to offer so few.

I'm excited about what is possible.

Week 2:
Today's session put me in touch with feelings that had not surfaced for years. The writing forced me to remember my childhood.

Week 3:
I've seen a lot of excellent activities to use with my classes.

Week 5:
This writing workshop has given me the courage to start writing again. It remains to be seen what this can lead to. The skills which I have improved or learned will be helpful not only in my personal writing but also in my teaching of students how to write. It's great to be able to give the theory but oh so much better when you can talk from personal experience.

The workshop was important because it gave me personal sense of success when I've had such a year of despair as it relates to teaching, students, and the profession.

Week 1:
I enjoyed the different pre-writing activities, especially since they jarred a lot of pleasant memories that I thought had disappeared.

Students learn what they re-formulate in their own words. I've long suspected this because it's true for me. I'm glad to see that it's been confirmed in a study.

Week 3:
I really enjoyed it today. I am especially interested in sentence combining as a way of generating sentences that then become a subject to write on.

I can also see students being given a body of facts to learn (say historical information) and then being asked to order it and combine it into an essay.

I have done things like this that worked fairly well.

Week 5:
The most helpful thing about the workshop was, I think, the presentation on sentence combining. I have a number of ideas for using sentence combining as a lead-in to writing assignments. I also have a plan for using a writing folder in my class that is the major focus. I also think that the people in the workshop could stick together and press for changes in curriculum and more money and supplies to help good writing teachers teach writing.

I thought your workshop was very well planned and carried out.

Week 1:
I am interested in the idea of having students rephrase what they have learned.

Week 2:
I am very appreciative of the opportunity to be here. It's like a vacation ... from family and work. I'm having <u>great</u> difficulty generating ideas for writing. It seems it has been a very long time since I have read or written.

Week 4:
This has been the best session yet! All of the sessions have been pleasant, enjoyable and "non-threatening." It's so exciting, though, to learn practical ways to improve my writing. I've been told my writing was good and bad, but I've never been told exactly how to make it better. I would like more practical help I can use to work with my own writing.

Week 5:
As a teacher, reader, and writer, time is a major issue. I've found support for the idea that it is o.k. to allow the students the time necessary to process, write, and revise. We can brainstorm and still be on target. Only through writing will the students learn how to write.

I feel that I gained the most from the sessions with Bill Strong and Dot Carmichael where we learned specific techniques to improve our own writing. It was also good to be in a setting where there was a non-threatening forum for sharing with other teachers.

Week 1:
I am reminded that music and drawing are good pre-writing activities, that I need to read my own work aloud when I write, that I should keep a pen and paper handy always because once the process starts, I have a thousand things I want to say.

Week 2:
I'm ready to get out of nouns and verbs and commas and get into ideas and approaches through writing which will give kids success and self-esteem. I like my editing group; they're very supportive.

Week 4:
Dot's approach today did more for me personally, in terms of revising this piece I'm laboring over, than I thought. I realized it in my editing group. We really worked on revising this week! Great!

I have really enjoyed each speaker's approach and would like time to practice and develop some of those skills.

Week 5:
Writing has been rekindled as my passion. My students know it because I talk about it frequently. The opportunity to write and to listen to others who write and who teach writing has been most helpful. The power from this workshop group has been people power -- ideas, skills, support -- and sharing. Having someone say -- Boy, I like your writing! Now I like my writing, too. I say more writing (hands-on) workshops! Response groups are great -- I appreciate talking with teachers at different levels from around the city. I don't care for theory, but talking about sentence combining, brainstorming, using action verbs really turned me on. The phrase I learned here that has transformed me is "show, not tell!"

Week 1:
The session today helped me see that many of us have the same ideas about what we see as strong writing. When reading our pieces in small groups, the same comments were made by all. Those of us listening to

the writing had the same questions and noted the same descriptions.

It was also reassuring to hear from others the difficulty they too have in selecting a topic and writing about that topic in a given time.

Most of all, thanks for the non-threatening presentation and environment and for the relaxed atmosphere.

Week 2:
The writing groups are fun and a sense of esprit de corps is developing. All of us shake a little less when reading our pieces.

Week 3:
Bill Strong was wonderful. I thoroughly enjoyed today and look forward to using some of his exercises in classes. Our editing group seemed to go better today as we began to offer specific suggestions so I think you were on target with your comments.

Week 4:
I think we need to continue these support groups -- writing groups -- on a regular basis. We need to continue to practice and exchange ideas.

Week 5:
The most helpful to me personally was the writing groups and having to write. Over the course of years, my writing has grown rusty and nonexistent except for report writing.

Having had no formal training in composition, I appreciated the activities suggested, especially those related to revising and editing.

Although I think getting together by grades is useful, I also believe something must be said for grouping across grade levels. I think editing groups with people from various areas might be helpful for some; however, I was grateful for the group I was in and for all of the support and concrete suggestions offered.

The workshop was too short -- think it could be improved by extending it somehow -- allow more time for writing and for writing groups. We were just beginning to feel secure about giving specific feedback.

All of the speakers were specific and gave helpful information. Sentence combining, kinds of verbs, writing groups, I have already used when teaching classes.

The more I learn about writing and the writing process, the more I am convinced that by improving writing, we can improve students' scores on all kinds of tests.

Thanks for a good six weeks -- it's been the best workshop I've attended in the last fifteen years.

What Learning Logs Tell Us

Learning logs may be the best way to assess the value of a series of workshops because they allow the participants freedom to choose the areas they deem important and to discuss their feelings and ideas in a frank manner with a reader who does not judge, but responds.

In this series, the logs show a consistent growth in comfort with writing as a way to express feelings and ideas, as a way to learn and explore, and as a way to teach and respond.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge, John Henry Newman acknowledges in The Idea of a University (1852), is power. However, he also reminds us that before it is a power, knowledge is a good, not only an instrument but an end. This distinction, that knowledge must be first and foremost for its own sake, is not merely an abstract distinction. In the Keystone Spring Writing Workshops, we believed that by bringing our participants into contact with very current research and methodology regarding the teaching and act of writing the results would be favorable. Our approach was to present knowledge and to let the teachers make the specific applications; we believe this method to have been successful.

The strategy of using workshops, as opposed to a formal lecture format, was helpful in that it promoted communalism among the presenters and the participants. In treating our teachers professionally, the common boundaries that prohibit learning were dissolved. As the teachers began to view writing as much more than the mere arbitrary exercise of prescriptive rules, their attitudes began to shift as evinced in both their attitude scales and their learning logs.

Too, the very use of holistic evaluation promoted an intelligent view of the writing process. In favoring direct over indirect assessment, this reliable and valid method evaluated the participants' entire writing act, the means by which a total impression is made on the reader. Interestingly, this method helps us to articulate our differences about the cosmetic features

of writing so that we may explore those areas in which we fundamentally agree.

Throughout the report, we have tried to stress that what is at stake in the teaching of writing is not yet another voguish notion, not another mere pedagogical bandwagon that, like the overhead projector, will make every teacher superior. What is at stake here is both the generation of thought and the recording of thought: the making of civilization, if you will, and the recording of its processes. As writing skills are developed, consciousness itself is altered, and, in pursuit of methods through which this may take place, nothing is insignificant.

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